

United States Support to Liberia

United States support for Liberia is "nothing less than an effort by the United States to try and help the people of Liberia transform Liberia toward a lasting peace, and lasting prosperity. This is a remarkable goal that the people of Liberia have set for themselves – and it is in that direction that they and their democratic leaders are striving. They desire and they deserve our support."

- Secretary Rice's statement at the Liberia Partners' Forum, Washington, DC, February 13, 2007

The United States supports Liberia's efforts to revitalize the economy, strengthen governance and the rule of law, rehabilitate infrastructure, deliver basic services, and enhance national security. Since the end of Liberia's civil war in 2003, the United States has provided over \$750 million in direct bilateral support to Liberia. The United States also funds a quarter of the costs of the UN peacekeeping operation in Liberia.

Peace and Security

Security Sector Reform: The United States is completely restructuring Liberia's armed forces, retiring the old force of 14,000 and replacing it with a well-trained and well-equipped force of 2,000 that will protect Liberia's people and respect their human rights. From FY 2004 – FY 2007, the United States has obligated over \$139 million to the military reform effort. The United States continues to train and assist police and judicial services to combat Liberia's civil war-era legacy of crime and impunity.

United Nations Peacekeeping and Reintegration efforts: The United States devotes nearly \$200 million annually in assessed contributions to fund the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In addition to providing security, training, and capacity building through its 14,000-strong military and police units, UNMIL supports Liberian efforts to improve governance, rule of law, and economic growth. The United States, through the UN Development Program, is supporting the reintegration of ex-combatants.

Governing Justly and Democratically

Justice and Human Rights: The United States, through USAID and the Department of State, supports efforts to strengthen the judicial sector and expand access to justice. These efforts include establishing legal aid clinics, combating gender based violence with victim abuse centers, training alternative dispute mediators, conducting public legal education, renovating the Liberian Temple of Justice, prosecutor and public defender training, and implementing criminal case management and case tracking systems.

Good Governance: The United States is committing over \$19 million in FY 2007 funds to establish more transparent, accountable, effective, and responsible government and institutions. This commitment includes programs to strengthen the Liberian legislature, improve public administration, build capacity in Government of Liberia ministries and offices, rehabilitate local administrative buildings and other community infrastructure, and combat corruption and impunity.

Civil Society: The United States is working to improve the organizational capacity of Liberian civil society organizations and assist them in promoting public participation and their watchdog and advocacy functions.

Investing in People

Health: Devastated health facilities and a diminished health care workforce increase the challenges Liberia faces due to high fertility, malaria, HIV/AIDS, poor sanitation, and the lack of safe birthing services. Only 41% of Liberians have access to basic health services, including child vaccinations and potable water. Through USAID, the United States is supporting essential health services to roughly 700,000 Liberians in underserved areas of the country, and contributes to national health planning, training of health professionals, and refurbishing facilities. Liberia is a focus country for the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative.

Education: Through the President's Africa Education Initiative and USAID funding, the United States is helping the Liberian government meet its people's education needs. With over \$12 million in FY 2007

funding, the United States assists the Liberian government in revitalizing the devastated education system and enhancing Liberia's human resource capacity. Key education activities include training some 1,800 teachers, basic education for out-of-school/overage youth who missed out on schooling during the civil war, adult literacy, book distribution and school scholarships, altogether benefiting over 11,500 students.

Protection of Vulnerable Populations: The United States, through USAID, is helping 16,500 Liberian households reestablish and strengthen social safety nets, cope with chronic poverty, reduce vulnerability to malnutrition, and increase self-reliance. The Liberian Integrated Assistance Program (LIAP) is rehabilitating damaged infrastructure and providing agricultural inputs in highly vulnerable rural communities, helping communities identify, prepare and respond to shocks and hazards. To increase food security, LIAP provides food rations for school feeding, food-insecure areas.

Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction

Debt Relief: Liberia is poised to enter the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative (HIPC) debt relief process that will result in the cancellation of most of Liberia's approximately \$1.5 billion in multilateral debt, as well as much of its bilateral and commercial debt. The United States intends to cancel 100% of Liberia's over \$400 million in outstanding bilateral claims, when Liberia completes the HIPC process.

Reengagement with International Financial Institutions (IFIs): The United States exercised strong leadership, along with G-8 partners and over 90 developed developing and middle-income countries, to reach consensus on the arrears clearance package that will allow Liberia to reengage with the IFIs. Normalized relationships with the IFIs will provide Liberia access to needed economic growth and poverty reduction support.

Trade and Investment: The United States, through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the African Development Foundation (ADF), is committed to providing over \$20 million to support small and medium Liberian enterprises. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative has helped the Liberian private sector take advantage of benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences, the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act and through a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement with Liberia.

Transportation: By directly financing and rehabilitating physical transport infrastructure (roads, bridges), the United States, through USAID, is restoring Liberia's agricultural sector, where 70% of Liberians work, and facilitating growth in the health, security, and education sectors. To date, the United States has assisted in the construction or repair of 100 kilometers of transportation infrastructure. By the end of 2008, the United States will have completed an additional 360 kilometers of transportation infrastructure.

Energy: The United States helped restore power to parts of Monrovia through the Emergency Power Program. Over the next five years, USAID will help rebuild electricity distribution, expand electricity supply to rural areas, and increase access to affordable energy supplies. OPIC and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency are providing support for a study on Liberia's hydroelectricity potential.

Agriculture: Liberia's agriculture sector, including forestry, is critical to the economic development of the country. The United States, through USAID, focuses on conservation of protected areas, the rehabilitation of smallholder tree crop farms of rubber, cocoa, and oil palm, restocking of decimated food animals, and training in business and marketing skills. Through the Liberia Forest Initiative and other programs, the United States is helping improve policies on natural resource management and increasing the transparent and legitimate use, ownership, and commercialization of timber, forest products, mineral, fisheries and the protection of Liberia's unique biodiversity.

Humanitarian Assistance

Emergency Assistance: The United States, through USAID, in FY 2007 provided \$2 million in food and other emergency assistance that reached 96,000 Liberians in need.

Refugees: The United States, through the Department of State, has supported the return and reintegration of 111,000 Liberian refugees and more than 320,000 internally displaced persons since 2004.

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USAID Monrovia	RScott	ok
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